

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0764

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMCONSUL MADRAS

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 11328

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IN

SUBJECT: ARRESTS SINCE INDIA'S EMERGENCY

REF: NEW DELHI 10054

1. WE ESTIMATE THAT AS OF AUGUST 14 A TOTAL OF 23,474 PERSONS ARE NOW BEING DETAINED IN INDIA AS A RESULT OF THE PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY ON JUNE 26. (WE ESTIMATED INUIE AS OF JULY 25, REFTEL.) MOST OF THE ABOVE PERSONS ARE BELIEVED DETAINED WITHOUT BENEFIT OF NORMAL JUDICIAL PROCESS. THEIR ONLY RECOURSE APPEARS TO BE EXECUTIVE REVIEW OF THEIR CASES MAINLY AT THE STATE LEVEL, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW HOW EFFECTIVELY OR WITH WHAT DEGREE OF JUSTICE SUCH ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES ARE FUNCTIONING. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DETAINEES BREAKS DOWN AS FOLLOWS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC - 16,428 AND POLITICAL - 7,046 OF 3,690 ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN
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CONNECTION WITH PROSCRIBED ORGANIZATIONS. ADDRESSEES WILL NOTE

THAT THE GREATEST INCREASE SINCE JULY 25 IS IN THE CATEGORY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC "CRIMES." THERE IS, HOWEVER, NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW MANY IN THAT CATEGORY ARE ALSO CONSIDERED POLITICAL UNDESIRABLES.

2. AS IN PAST REPORTS, WE HAVE BEEN CONSERVATIVE IN OUR ESTIMATES. INFORMATION OF ARRESTS IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN, AND FOR SOME STATES WE HAVE NOT INCREASED OUR FIGURES ABOVE THAT OF THE JULY 25 REFTEL. JUST AS THE GOI IS NOT VOLUNTERRING MUCH INFORMATION ABOUT NEW DETAINEES, IT IS NOT PROVIDING DATA ABOUT THE NUMBER OF PERSONS RELEASED, PRESUMABLY TO AVOID GIVING TOO MUCH INFORMATION AS TO THE NUMBER ORIGINALLY DETAINED. DESPITE THE LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE RELEASED, HOWEVER, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT OUR ESTIMATES ARE ON THE LOW SIDE. WE HAVE NO NEW INFORMATION ABOUT THE NUMBER OF DETAINED MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, BELIEVED TO STAND AT TWENTY-SEVEN.

3. AS THE STATE OF EMERGENCY BECOMES MORE OF A FACT OF LIFE IN INDIA, WE FIND THAT PEOPLE ARE INCREASINGLY RESIGNED TO THE LIKELIHOOD THAT SUCH LUMINARIES AS J.P. NARAYAN AND MORARJI DESAI AND THE THOUSANDS OF OTHER LESSER LIGHTS ARE IN FOR THE LONG HAUL. WHEREAS IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE EMERGENCY THERE WERE EXPRESSIONS OF SHOCK AND DISMAY OVER THE ARRESTS, THE TOPIC ONLY INFREQUENTLY COMES UP IN CONVERSATION NOW.

4. RELIABLE SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT SHEIKH ABDULLAH VISITED MRS. GANDHI IN DELHI LAST WEEK TO DISCUSS AN ARRANGEMENT BY WHICH J.P., MORARJI, VAJPAYEE, AND OTHER OPPOSITION LEADERS CAN BE RELEASED. MRS. GANDHI REPORTEDLY LAID DOWN TERMS THAT INCLUDED AGREEMENT NOT TO CRITICIZE HER AND TO ENDORSE HER ECONOMIC PROGRAM. J.P., MORARJI AND VAJPAYEE HAVE REPORTEDLY TURNED DOWN THE OFFER. THE SHEIKH IS STILL TRYING.
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